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THE WHITE HOUSE

February 4, 1988

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TO:



Office of Congressional Affairs, CIA  
(By Courier)



Attached is the material you  
requested. The White House (Ball)  
sent the interim reply; State (Dyer)  
sent the substantial response.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

INCOMING

DATE RECEIVED: FEBRUARY 25, 1986

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: THE HONORABLE GERRY E. STUDDS

SUBJECT: REQUESTS INFORMATION REGARDING CERTAIN  
ASPECTS OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD HONDURAS

OCA 88-0342

OCA FILE WH

|               |                              | ACTION |          | DISPOSITION |             |
|---------------|------------------------------|--------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| ROUTE TO:     |                              | ACT    | DATE     | TYPE        | C COMPLETED |
| OFFICE/AGENCY | (STAFF NAME)                 | CODE   | YY/MM/DD | PFSP        | D YY/MM/DD  |
| M. B. OGLESBY |                              | ORG    | 86/02/25 | WB A 860304 | TR          |
| STATE         | REFERRAL NOTE:               |        |          |             |             |
| CIA           | REFERRAL NOTE: Legis Affairs | D      | 86/03/12 | B           | 86/04/08    |
|               | REFERRAL NOTE: Legis Affairs | A      | 86/03/12 |             | 1 1         |
|               | REFERRAL NOTE:               | A      | 86/04/14 |             | 86/04/14 AB |
| ILLEGIB       | REFERRAL NOTE:               |        |          |             | 1 1         |

COMMENTS:

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ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: 5 MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: 1230

MAIL USER CODES: (A) (B) (C)

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|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| *ACTION CODES:           | *DISPOSITION         | *OUTGOING            | * |
| *                        | *                    | *CORRESPONDENCE:     | * |
| *A-APPROPRIATE ACTION    | *A-ANSWERED          | *TYPE RESP=INITIALS  | * |
| *C-COMMENT/RECCM         | *E-NCN-SPEC-REFERRAL | *OF SIGNER           | * |
| *D-DRAFT RESPONSE        | *C-COMPLETED         | *CODE = A            | * |
| *F-FURNISH FACT SHEET    | *S-SUSPENDED         | *COMPLETED = DATE OF | * |
| *I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC* |                      | *OUTGOING            | * |
| *P-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY * |                      |                      | * |
| *S-FOR-SIGNATURE *       |                      |                      | * |
| *X-INTERIM REPLY *       |                      |                      | * |

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REFER QUESTIONS AND ROUTING UPDATES TO CENTRAL REFERENCE  
(ROOM 75, OEOB) EXT-2590  
KEEP THIS WORKSHEET ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL INCOMING  
LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO RECORDS  
MANAGEMENT.

UNCLASSIFIED  
(Classification)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT  
TRANSMITTAL FORM

S/S 8607931

Date April 9, 1986

For: VADM John M. Poindexter  
National Security Council  
The White House

Reference:

To: President Reagan From: The Honorable Gerry E. Studds

Date: February 21, 1986 Subject: U.S. Policy toward Honduras

Referral Dated: March 12, 1986

ID# 377968

(if any)

       The attached item was sent directly to the  
Department of State

Action Taken:

       A draft reply is attached.

       A draft reply will be forwarded.

       A translation is attached.

  X   An information copy of a direct reply is attached.

       We believe no response is necessary for the reason  
cited below.

       The Department of State has no objection to the  
proposed travel.

       Other.

Remarks:

*E. F. Smith*  
for Nicholas Platt  
Executive Secretary

UNCLASSIFIED

(Classification)

## United States Department of State



Washington, D.C. 20520

APR - 8 1988

Dear Mr. Studds:

The President has asked me to reply to your letter of February 21 on behalf of Mr. Barnes, Mr. Garcia, Mr. Gejdenson, Mr. Weiss, and Mr. Kostmayer regarding press reports concerning U.S. knowledge of human rights abuses in Honduras.

On several occasions, the State Department and our Embassy in Tegucigalpa have refuted the allegations made in the press articles cited in your letter. Our position is unequivocal. At no time has there been any United States government involvement with alleged death squads in Honduras. United States officials in Honduras had no knowledge of nor did they condone abuses attributed to the Honduran Armed Forces and/or the FDN. There is no truth to the rumor that the United States has attempted to influence or interfere with internal assignment and promotion processes of the Honduran Armed Forces. We do not believe it is necessary to make further public statements on these allegations. To do so would only call attention to misinformation.

Let me turn to your specific questions.

"1. Were any U.S. officials aware that murders were being carried out by U.S. trained Honduran military personnel during the period from 1981 to 1984 and, if so, what actions were taken in response to that knowledge?"

As stated above, United States officials had no knowledge of abuses attributed to the Honduran Armed Forces during the period from 1981 to 1984.

There is no connection between specific professional training provided by the United States to Honduran security forces and charges that Honduran security personnel subsequently may have engaged in improper behavior. The USG has cooperated with the government of Honduras in its efforts to prevent clandestine arms shipments through Honduras and to subversive and terrorist organizations in Honduras.

The United States has worked with security forces in numerous countries. The net result of U.S. involvement has been a reduction in human rights abuses committed by the government security forces in those countries. U.S. professional training

The Honorable  
Gerry E. Studds,  
House of Representatives.

of security forces has contributed to putting countries back on the path of democracy. We note that there have been virtually no charges of political killing or disappearances in Honduras for nearly two years, and that the few charges made during that time have not been substantiated.

"2. Were any U.S. officials aware that murders were being carried out in Honduras by persons affiliated with the FDN during this period, and, if so, what actions were taken in response to that knowledge?"

At the time, U.S. officials did not have knowledge of human rights abuses attributed to the FDN. Subsequently, when we learned of human rights violations by members of the FDN, pressure was placed on the FDN to insure that appropriate action was taken. We have also seen reports that individuals identified as Nicaraguan exiles are alleged to have committed abuses in Honduras. Some of these individuals may have had earlier dealings with the FDN, but at the time of the alleged activity they were not affiliated with that organization.

"3. Has any official of the U.S. Government attempted to influence the military assignment, promotion, or continued military service of officers of the Honduran Army, or in any other way sought to discourage the public disclosure by the Honduran Armed Forces of the facts surrounding the murders and disappearances that occurred during this period."

The assignment and promotion of Honduran military officers is strictly an internal matter of the Honduran Armed Forces and the Honduran government. U.S. officials have no appropriate role in these matters and have not sought one. We believe that the press reports which make this charge are based on allegations by two or three disgruntled individuals seeking to enhance their careers. They may have portrayed themselves as reformist and nationalistic, but they do not constitute an identifiable subgroup within the Honduran military. All Honduran military officers are, in our experience, nationalists in that they seek to serve the best interests of their nation. Finally, there is no evidence that U.S. policy toward Honduras or Central America has caused a rift in the Armed Forces as some press items suggest.

With regard to the suggestion that the U.S. has ignored charges of human rights abuses in Honduras, the department's human rights reports for the past several years have discussed both allegations and documented cases of political killings and disappearances. The United States has no role in the investigation of human rights abuses in a sovereign nation such as Honduras. No U.S. official has interfered in the

performance of such investigations by the proper Honduran authorities. We know of no effort by the Honduran military to prevent investigation of human rights abuses.

I would like to go beyond the specific questions you raised to refute unwritten notions surfaced in your letter. In 1984 and 1985 then-Major Ricardo Zuniga travelled to the United States and spoke with Congressional staffers and members of the press. In June 1984, Major Zuniga was involuntarily retired from the Honduran armed forces for going outside the chain of command with public statements critical of Honduran government policies.

Ricardo Zuniga was reported missing on August 21 when he failed to return from a business meeting. His body was found September 5, 1985. Honduran authorities charged a Cuban-born Honduran businessman, his wife, and two Nicaraguan-born men with the murder. We understand that the two Nicaraguan men confessed to committing the murder on the instructions of the Cuban businessman in connection with a financial transaction. To the best of our knowledge, the two Nicaraguans had no connection with the Nicaraguan resistance. The November 19 Christian Science Monitor article attempted to construct a connection between Mr. Zuniga's death and his reported statements to persons connected with the U.S. Congress. We are aware of no evidence to substantiate any link between Ricardo Zuniga's comments to Congressional staffers and his death.

I believe that this information responds fully to your request. I hope it allays your concerns on this subject.

Sincerely,

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James W. Dyer  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs

Drafted: ARA/CEN:RLikins *PMU*  
3/17/86 2199c x74955

Cleared: ARA:WWalker  
ARA/CEN:RMelton  
ARA/CEN:RGodard  
HA:MGustafson  
INR/IAA:KSalcedo  
CIA   
CIA  
H:JForbes

*PMU  
for*

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T H E   W H I T E   H O U S E   O F F I C E

REFERRAL

MARCH 12, 1986

TO: DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
ATTN: LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

ACTION REQUESTED:

DRAFT REPLY FOR SIGNATURE OF:  
WHITE HOUSE STAFF MEMBER

REMARKS: ALSO REFERRED TO CIA

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 377968

MEDIA: LETTER, DATED FEBRUARY 21, 1986

TO: PRESIDENT REAGAN

FROM: THE HONORABLE GERRY E. STUDDS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON DC 20515

SUBJECT: EXPRESS ALARM OVER REPORTS CONCERNING U. S.  
POLICY TOWARD HONDURAS. MENTION A SPECIFIC  
NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE THAT ALLEGES THAT THE  
CIA AIDED HONDURAN SECURITY FORCES THAT IT  
KNEW WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING KILLED A  
NUMBER OF PEOPLE DETAINED FOR POLITICAL  
REASONS. IF THESE REPORTS ARE UNTRUE,  
SUGGEST THAT A DECLARATION TO THAT EFFECT BE

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN  
TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE  
UNDERSIGNED AT 456-7486.

RETURN CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE  
(OR DRAFT) TO:  
AGENCY LIAISON, ROOM 91, THE WHITE HOUSE

SALLY KELLEY  
DIRECTOR OF AGENCY LIAISON  
PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE



March 4, 1986

Dear Mr. Kostmayer:

Thank you for your February 21 letter to the President, cosigned by five of your colleagues, requesting information concerning certain aspects of U.S. policy toward Honduras.

Your inquiry is being directed to the President's foreign policy advisers to ensure that your questions about specific news articles are given appropriate attention. You should be receiving an additional response in the near future.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

William L. Ball III  
Assistant to the President

The Honorable Peter H. Kostmayer  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

WLB:KRJ:hlb

cc: w/copy of inc to Legis Affrs, State for  
DRAFT response in coordination with CIA and  
routed through NSC

cc: w/copy of inc to Legis Affrs, CIA - for  
appropriate action

cc: w/copy of inc to NSC Secretariat - FYI

GERRY E. STUDDS  
10TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

311700  
8607931

GREATERT NEW BEDFORD  
POST OFFICE BUILDING  
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740  
617-696-1261

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
1501 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
202-225-3111

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

SOUTH SHORE  
HARVARD COURT  
193 ROCKLAND STREET  
HARVARD, MA 02339  
617-626-3866

COMMITTEES  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
MERCHANT MARINE AND  
FISHERIES

CAPE AND ISLANDS  
145 MAIN STREET  
HYANNIS, MA 02601  
617-771-0866

CHAIRMAN  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
COAST GUARD AND NAVIGATION

February 21, 1986

Dear Mr. President:

Recent press reports have reinforced earlier concerns expressed by ourselves and by other Members of Congress concerning certain aspects of U.S. policy toward the Central American country of Honduras.

Our purpose in writing is to solicit from you a clear statement concerning the facts that are at issue in this controversy.

Last week, the New York Times reported that "the Central Intelligence Agency aided Honduran security forces that it knew were responsible for having killed a number of people detained for political reasons between 1981 and 1984." The story, which cited two American officials and a Honduran military officer as sources, quoted one of the Americans as saying that, "The CIA had nothing to do with picking people up, but they knew about it and when some people disappeared, they looked the other way."

Similar allegations were made in Washington eighteen months ago by a major in the Honduran Army, Ricardo Zuniga, now deceased. Major Zuniga also stated that his attempt -- and that of other Honduran officers -- to seek a full investigation into the disappearances, was being opposed by officials from the U.S. Embassy and the CIA. Major Zuniga alleged that U.S. officials were urging Honduran military and political leaders to purge him and certain other officers from the military because of their desire to seek an honest investigation, and to explore, in particular, the role that exiles affiliated with the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) played in those crimes.

Last November 19, the Christian Science Monitor cited both American and Honduran sources in reporting that "reformist officers continue to press for the punishment of military and intelligence personnel who are guilty of human rights abuses. According to these sources, the more conservative officers, and much of the U.S. intelligence establishment in Honduras, continue to oppose such a move...reformist officers believe that many in the U.S. intelligence and military communities are still pressing for their removal."

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The President  
February 21, 1986  
Page 2

On January 31 of this year, the New York Times reported that "Central Intelligence Agency operatives have played a key part in ... attempting to weaken or isolate a group of young nationalist officers considered to be critical of U.S. policy in Honduras."

Obviously, these stories, if true, are deeply disturbing. U.S. foreign policy in Central America has been repeatedly depicted by officials in your Administration as being committed to the observation and protection of human rights. A failure on the part of the U.S. to expose or to seek to halt a pattern of murders carried out by a U.S. trained or supported group would be impossible to justify.

Our concerns would be magnified if it were true that U.S. officials had attempted to purge or isolate Honduran military officers who sought, on their own, to identify, expel, or bring to justice those responsible for these crimes.

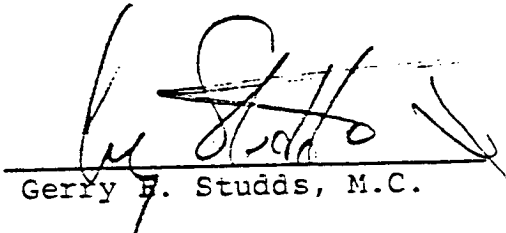
If these reports are, as we hope, untrue, we believe it would be in the best interests of the United States if a clear and unambiguous declaration to that effect were issued.

For this reason, we would like to respectfully request that your Administration provide a complete and forthright answer to the following three questions:

- 1) Were any U.S. officials aware that murders were being carried out by U.S. trained Honduran military personnel during the period from 1981 to 1984 and, if so, what actions were taken in response to that knowledge?
- 2) Were any U.S. officials aware that murders were being carried out in Honduras by persons affiliated with the FDN during this period and, if so, what actions were taken in response to that knowledge?
- 3) Has any official of the U.S. Government attempted to influence the military assignment, promotion, or continued military service of officers of the Honduran Army, or in any other way sought to discourage the public disclosure by the Honduran armed forces of the facts surrounding the murders and disappearances that occurred during this period?

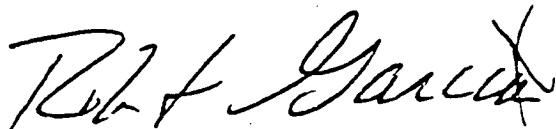
We want to thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

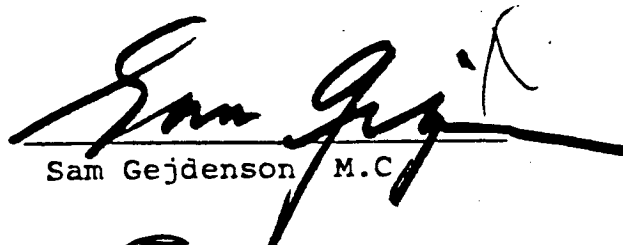
  
Gerry F. Studts, M.C.

  
Michael D. Barnes, M.C.

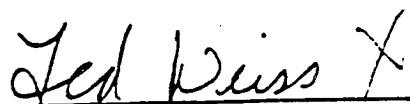
The President  
February 21, 1986  
Page 3



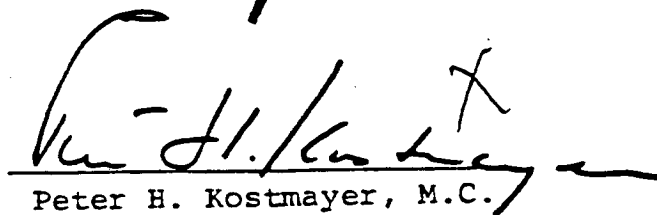
Robert Garcia, M.C.



Sam Gejdenson, M.C.



Ted Weiss, M.C.



Peter H. Kostmayer, M.C.

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500